



# MOUNT ST. MARY'S SEMINARY & SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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CINCINNATI † OHIO

## *School of Theology Student Handbook*

2024-2025

(Rev. November 2024)

Dear Students,

Pope St. John Paul II began his encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* with these words:

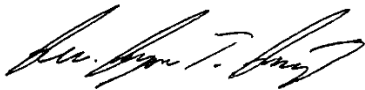
Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves (cf. *Ex* 33:18; *Ps* 27:8-9; 63:2-3; *Jn* 14:8; *1 Jn* 3:2).

We at Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology are grateful for your desire to know the truth and to deepen your understanding of the Lord and of His will for your life through your intellectual study of the Faith.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide helpful reference information to you as a student of the School of Theology. For detailed policies and procedures, students are asked to review the official *Catalog* and the MTSM website.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, may we all continue to “advance in wisdom, in age, and in grace.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Ryan T. Ruiz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "T".

Reverend Ryan T. Ruiz, S.L.D.  
*Dean of the School of Theology*

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## **Name and Mission**

THE ATHENAEUM OF OHIO was incorporated in the State of Ohio on March 24, 1928, under the direction of the Archbishop of Cincinnati, the Most Reverend John T. McNicholas, and is the name under which degrees are awarded and contracts entered into.

The name under which the institution is promoted and marketed is MOUNT ST. MARY'S SEMINARY & SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (MTSM). For the purposes of this handbook, the corporate name is used in all instances in which the whole of the institution is referenced as a singular entity, and the separate names "Mount St. Mary's Seminary" and "School of Theology" are used in reference to these separate divisions of the institution.

MISSION STATEMENT: Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology, the center for ecclesial formation sponsored by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, forms men and women to faithfully follow Christ and serve His mission by fulfilling their vocations in the Church.

## Degrees, Certificates, and Endorsements

Consistent with its mission, the School of Theology offers four master's degree programs. Three are academic degrees—Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (MAB), Master of Arts in Theology (MAT), and Master of Arts in Catholic Studies (MACS)—which assist in developing men and women for further studies and academic and educational roles in the Church. The Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM) is a professional degree that includes formation components designed to prepare students for lay ecclesial ministry. In addition, certificate and graduate certificate programs are offered in Catholic theology and pastoral ministry, and endorsement programs are offered in several focus areas. Qualified students may also enroll in most School of Theology courses on a credit or audit basis without having been admitted to a program in order to design their own course of study.

<b>Academic Programs</b>	<b>Program Credits</b>
Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (MAB)	36
Master of Arts in Catholic Studies (MACS)	36
Master of Arts in Theology (MAT)	36
Graduate Certificate in Catholic Theology (GCCT)	19
Certificate in Catholic Theology (CCT)	16
<b>Lay Ecclesial Formation Programs</b>	
Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM)	33
Graduate Certificate in Pastoral Ministry (GCPM)	22
Certificate in Pastoral Ministry (CPM)	22
Graduate Endorsement in Liturgy and Worship	12
Endorsement in Liturgy and Worship	11
Graduate Endorsement in Pastoral Accompaniment	13
Endorsement in Pastoral Accompaniment	11
Graduate Endorsement in Religious Education and Evangelization	12
Endorsement in Religious Education and Evangelization	11

MAB and MAT requirements include a comprehensive exam and a master's thesis; the MACS requires a comprehensive exam and a synthetic research paper.

For the MAPM, students must complete a capstone project; CPM students complete a project in ministry. All lay ecclesial formation programs include a field education component and theological reflection requirement.

See the MTSM 2024-25 [Catalog](#) for full descriptions of each program.

## Academic Matters

### Advising

The dean of the School of Theology serves as the academic advisor to all School of Theology students and also serves as formation advisor for most graduate-level lay ecclesial formation students. The coordinator of lay ecclesial formation serves as formation advisor to most northern-area lay ecclesial

formation students. It is the student's responsibility to seek academic or formational advising as needed. Advising meetings are available by appointment with the dean or coordinator. The coordinator will be present at the northern-area satellite campus at least twice per month.

In addition, the registrar and faculty members are all well qualified to offer informal advising and academic support to students as requested.

### **Artificial Intelligence Use Policy**

The institutional policy states: "All output produced by generative AI tools is considered to be third-party content. As with any content taken from the internet or other media, students must acknowledge the use of this content when it is quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise incorporated in their work. Students are prohibited from submitting content generated by an AI platform as their own. Failure to disclose content taken from generative AI tools will be treated as a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy." Instructors are permitted to define how students utilize AI tools in their course or on specific assignments. If this differs from the institutional policy, then the details must be stated in writing. Please see the complete Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence on the MTSM [website](#) and in the [Catalog](#).

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions for each course. If an absence must occur for a serious reason, then the student is expected to inform his or her instructor prior to class if possible. Absences during a semester which exceed the number of times the class meets per week may be grounds for failure. The instructor may give a grade of "F" in such cases (see the [Catalog](#)).

### **Bookstore/Seminary Student Store**

The main campus Seminary Student Store, located on the lower level at the west end of the main building, will post its hours of operations at the beginning of the semester. The bookstore usually holds special open hours during the first week of each semester to accommodate evening and weekend students. Check the website or the Populi homepage for hours. Satellite campus students, after receiving their booklists via Populi or from their course instructors, are advised to purchase their books through any trusted retail outlet.

If a parish has agreed to pay for a student's textbooks, the student must purchase the books and then arrange for personal reimbursement from the parish.

### **Cancellation of a Class Session**

On rare occasions, an instructor may cancel or modify the delivery of a class session due to last-minute illness, extreme weather conditions, or some other emergency. The instructor will notify students by email via Populi and will explain the means of recuperating the class session, such as meeting by Zoom, an alternative assignment, etc.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

Please ask the permission of the instructor and fellow students before taping or recording a class. All courses, whether at the main campus or satellite locations, held in person or via videoconference, are for registered students only. Guests or family members are not allowed to attend class or to sit in on an online class without prior clearance from the instructor and/or dean.

Please note that some professors do not allow food or drink in the classroom or may have specific rules regarding the use of laptops or phones during class sessions.

### **Communications**

At the start of each academic year, new students are assigned an institutional email address, managed through Microsoft Outlook. All MTSM email accounts are password protected and require multifactor authentication when first logging in from a new device. MTSM emails are to be accessed solely by the student.

Faculty and staff will communicate with students primarily via email. Students should make sure that their Populi profile includes their current email address and phone number, and email accounts should be checked regularly.

Information about upcoming events can be found on the MTSM website [www.athenaeum.edu](http://www.athenaeum.edu), Facebook [www.facebook.com/MTSMOhio](https://www.facebook.com/MTSMOhio), and other social media.

### **Course Evaluations**

Near the end of a term, students are encouraged to complete an evaluation for each of their courses via Populi. Feedback through the evaluation process is very important because it helps improve teaching strategies and the design of future courses. Course evaluation responses and comments are anonymous; faculty and staff are not able to match responses with an individual student. That being said, it is anticipated that the student course feedback will be constructive and respectful.

### **Course Syllabus**

Each credit course has a syllabus posted on the course's Populi page. The syllabus provides valuable information such as course objectives and goals, texts and other resources that will be used, a schedule of lessons and assignments, and information about evaluation, grading, and expectations.

### **Financial Aid**

The School of Theology has a limited amount of need-based financial aid to offer students who are fully admitted to a degree or certificate program. Financial aid applications and federal tax return information will be accepted at designated times throughout the academic year (typically, before July 1 for fall semester, November 1 for spring semester, and April 1 for summer term). The [application form](#) is available on the MTSM [website](#). Ordinarily, the maximum award will not exceed one half of the applicant's tuition expenses per semester, and many awards fall below that amount.

Students engaged in catechetical ministry may be eligible to apply for limited support through the Gabrielle Bouscaren Fund administered by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Center for the New Evangelization. That application is available online through their [website](#). The School of Theology is not connected in any way with the deadlines, application form, and/or decisions regarding the awarding of these funds.



## Graduation

Graduation is held once per year at the completion of the spring semester. Students planning to graduate in May should complete their thesis, major research paper, capstone, or project in ministry by April 15. Credits applied toward program completion may not be more than ten years old. Students must pay any outstanding financial obligations and return all library books before graduation. The graduation application form will be posted on the MTSM website by January 31 (see the [website](#) and [Catalog](#)).

## Learning Outcomes

Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology has developed an assessment program to systematize its efforts to monitor the quality of its educational programs. Academic goals and outcomes have been defined for each graduate degree program. Achievement of these outcomes is regularly assessed using multiple strategies that include both direct and indirect measures of student learning. Students are asked to respond in a timely manner to educational effectiveness opinion surveys as this information is valuable for program planning and improvement.

## Registration

Notice of open registration is posted on the MTSM website prior to each semester and sent via email to current students. Registration is complete when payment is made online by credit card, by mail (check or money order), or in person at the registrar's office. A 3 percent convenience fee is charged for all credit card transactions. Late fees apply after a specific date noted on the website. Email or call the registrar ([registrar@athenaeum.edu](mailto:registrar@athenaeum.edu) or 513-233-6118) for questions about tuition payment, class schedules, and registration (see the [website](#) and [Catalog](#)).

## Request for Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation will be made for students having special needs related to the learning environment. Please consult with the dean of the School of Theology in advance of classes.

## Writing Standards

Ordinarily, written work for courses must adhere to the format and style requirements of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian, an adaptation of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The Maly Library website offers many resources such as a [course papers guide](#) and a [citation guide](#). A thesis/major research paper guide is also available on the library website.

Plagiarism is the intentional and/or unintentional use of someone else's ideas as expressed in words, photos, graphics, music, etc. without proper credit. Whenever a student summarizes, paraphrases, or quotes someone else's work without acknowledging the source, they have fallen into plagiarism. Plagiarism may be grounds for disciplinary action. The Maly Library offers helpful information on their [website](#).

No paper or assignment used to complete a requirement for one course may be submitted to complete a requirement in a different course without the consent of the faculty members involved.

## Safety and Security

### Building Hours/Access

Administrative office hours are 8:00 AM until 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. Messages may be left on voicemail at other times. Students are encouraged to contact the offices via email (see the contact list at the end of this handbook).

During the academic year, School of Theology students may access the main campus building through the east doors, the entrance nearest the Maly Library where the library drop box is located. These doors will be open:

Monday-Thursday: 7:30 AM to 9:00 PM

Friday: 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Saturday: 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Since this entrance involves stairs, a student needing access to the handicap entrance should communicate with the dean of the School of Theology before the start of the semester.

Access to the satellite campus facility is limited to classroom hours. Please contact the coordinator of lay ecclesial formation for details about the satellite campus.

### Decree on Child Protection

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati's *Decree on Child Protection* establishes norms to protect children and vulnerable adults and to provide a system for promptly responding to allegations of abuse. Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology complies fully with the Decree. If any MTSM program would involve working with children or any degree earned would result in working with children as defined in the Decree, the student will be required to complete the orientation program on the Decree as well as a criminal background check. The site of field education, project, and/or employment is responsible for verification of completion of the orientation and background check (see the [Catalog](#)).

### Drugs, Alcohol, and Firearms

The School of Theology prohibits the possession or use of illegal drugs while present for any activity, class, or occasion at the main campus or satellite locations. Such use or possession warrants expulsion from the institution. Discretion in the use of alcohol at any school-sponsored social event is expected. Firearms or weapons may not be carried into a class or activity at the main campus or a satellite location. Individuals violating this restriction or making threatening statements to students, faculty, or staff will be dismissed from the School of Theology.

### Fire Emergencies

**Main Campus:** In case of a fire emergency, if the alarm has not yet sounded, manually trip the fire alarm (e.g., pull the handle on a red alarm box located near an exit). Once tripped, the alarm system will automatically notify the fire department of a fire. As a fail-safe, the fire department should be notified by calling "911" to report the fire emergency.

All students and staff should evacuate the building by the nearest exit. Please refer to the maps located at the main entrances and throughout the building to determine the nearest exit. If power is lost, the

emergency lights will light hallways, and all exits will be illuminated. Students are asked to gather on the grassy area across from the main chapel in the front of the building. Please be aware of approaching emergency vehicles on the driveways.

**Satellite Campus:** In case of a fire emergency, students should follow the designated evacuation route posted in the facility as well as any additional instructions provided by faculty and facility administrators.

### **Parking**

Main campus students will be asked to complete an auto registration form each academic year (a form can be requested from the administrative office or the dean's office). Large parking areas are available to the west of the Bartlett Center (the red brick building adjacent to the main building) and to the east of the library. Handicap parking is available by the Bartlett Center, and a handicap-accessible entrance is located on the west end of the main building. There is no parking fee.

Please do not park in spaces reserved for resident priest-faculty. These reserved spaces are indicated by signs with the priest-faculty members' names on them.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology is firmly opposed to any form of harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability and sexual harassment. Not only is harassment offensive to the individual, it is offensive to the values of the Gospel and the Church's teachings on the dignity of the human person.

All students are entitled to an environment that is free from sexual harassment. If a student is harassed by another student or an individual connected with the School of Theology (i.e., faculty, employee, student), they should contact the dean of the School of Theology as soon as possible. Such behavior will not be tolerated and will be investigated and dealt with immediately. Proven sexual harassment may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from the School of Theology (see [website](#)).

### **Tornado Warning**

**Main Campus:** If a tornado siren sounds or a tornado warning alert for the area is received while class is in session, faculty and students should proceed as quickly and calmly as possible to the main hallway of the lower level. If this area cannot be reached, shelter should be taken in a small, inner area away from windows.

**Satellite Campus:** In case of a tornado, students should follow the shelter-in-place instructions posted in the facility, as well as any additional instructions provided by faculty and facility administrators.

## Student Life

### Bishop Fenwick Society (BFS)

Tuition and fees do not begin to cover the cost of one's education, and MTSM is grateful for the generosity of benefactors who support the mission of the School of Theology. Bishop Fenwick Society membership includes those who make an annual contribution of \$1,000 or more. BFS members enjoy special benefits such as invitations to exclusive events and reserved seating tickets for the celebration of the institution's patronal feast (First Vespers of the Immaculate Conception). Please pray for all benefactors of MTSM and consider becoming involved. For more information, contact the Advancement Office at 513-233-6299.

### Chorale

The Athenaeum Chorale sings for selected liturgical events, special occasions, and concerts in the chapel. Membership in this mixed choir is open by audition to singers age 18 and older. For more information on auditions, concerts, and appearances, or to offer financial support, contact Dr. Mary Catherine Levri, Music Director, at [mlevri@athenaeum.edu](mailto:mlevri@athenaeum.edu).

### Food Service

**Main Campus:** Although meal services are limited to resident priests, seminarians, faculty, and staff, School of Theology students are welcome to procure beverages from the refectory (the dining room) before, after, or between morning and afternoon classes. Special accommodations to purchase lunch in the refectory will be made for School of Theology students who have short intervals between their Saturday morning and afternoon classes. Please note that occasionally the refectory will be closed for certain events during the academic year.

### Internet

Wireless internet is available throughout the main campus, extending 15 feet outside the buildings. To follow best practices for digital security, the "MTSM\_Guest" network password is reset before each semester and is communicated to students. The wireless network is intended to be used for academic purposes only.

### Library

Students have borrowing privileges in the Eugene H. Maly Memorial Library, including access to a growing number of online books and journals. The library is a member of the OhioLINK consortium through which students may borrow items from approximately 90 academic libraries across Ohio. Northern area students may have books delivered via OhioLINK to a nearby facility. Contact the library for details about obtaining a library card and library resources.

Normal library hours when classes are in session are:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 8 AM-12 PM, 1-5 PM, and 6-10 PM

Wednesday: 8 AM-12 PM and 1-5 PM

Friday: 8 AM-12 PM and 1-4:30 PM

Saturday: 9-12 PM and 1-5 PM

Sunday: 2-6 PM

Check the library website for hours during holidays, breaks, and the summer. Professionally trained librarians who can answer reference and research questions are available Monday through Friday 8 AM-12 PM and 1-4:30 PM. For information or help, call 513-233-6136, email [circ@athenaeum.edu](mailto:circ@athenaeum.edu), or connect at <http://library.athenaeum.edu>.

## Liturgy

**Main campus:** School of Theology students are welcome to utilize the Chapel of St. Gregory the Great for private prayer throughout the day and evening when seminary liturgies are not being celebrated. When in the chapel, students are invited to sit in the back section of pews.

Solemn Vespers is held periodically, usually on the first Sunday evening of the month. First Vespers in honor of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of the institution, is held annually on the evening of December 7 (except December 8 in 2024). These events are open to School of Theology students and to the general public.

## Online Merchandise Store

MTSM-logoed hats, shirts, pens, travel mugs, and other merchandise are available for purchase at the Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology [Official Online Store](#).

## Populi

MTSM uses the web-based software Populi for its student information system (SIS) and learning management system (LMS). New students are issued an account by the registrar and receive an email with a link to set up a password. Populi is one of the primary means of communication between faculty and students and is utilized in a number of different ways for individual courses. Populi is also used for course registration, billing, transcripts and degree audits, and many other functions.

## Student Break Room

**Main campus:** Before and after class, School of Theology students are welcome to utilize the lay student break room located in room 132 on the main level (the door between the School of Theology offices and the interior staircase by the library entrance). A microwave and small refrigerator are available for students' use.

## Student Representation

The Faculty Senate is composed of personnel with faculty status as well as one student representative from Mount St. Mary's Seminary and one from the School of Theology, as recommended by the deans. The purpose of the Senate is to consider matters of policy, and meetings are held at least three times each academic year.

The Senate's Educational Affairs Committee also includes one student representative from Mount St. Mary's Seminary and one from the School of Theology, and its purpose is to promote development of educational programs.

The lay student serving on these committees represents the interests of all School of Theology students. The dean can provide the name and email of the current representative.

## **Lay Ecclesial Formation**

The mission of the lay ecclesial formation program at MTSM is to provide participants with the experiences they need to become more effective lay ecclesial ministers, to encourage others to grow in their faith and minister to others, and to minister with creativity and adaptability to the evolving needs of Church and society. Below is an outline of some of the formational elements.

### **Field Education**

Field Education is a supervised non-parochial ministry experience of 100 hours for GCPM and MAPM students, 75 hours for CPM students, 35 hours for graduate-level endorsement students, and 20 hours for non-graduate-level endorsement students. This experience is designed with the approval of the student's formation advisor to expand or develop skills for ministerial growth. See the [Field Education Handbook](#) on the MTSM website for more information.

### **Theological Reflection**

Theological reflection helps lay ecclesial formation students grow in wisdom and understanding by integrating practice with theory. P 502 Theological Reflection is offered for graduate-level students, and P 102 Theological Reflection is for the non-graduate level. Both courses are one credit.

### **Capstone (MAPM) or Project in Ministry (CPM)**

A capstone or project in ministry is a transformative, culminating component of the MAPM or CPM, respectively. This component includes an assessment of needs and gifts, written proposal, theological study, pastoral plan, and final report. The process is described in detail in the newly revised [Capstone Handbook](#) and [Project in Ministry Handbook](#) which are located on the MTSM website.

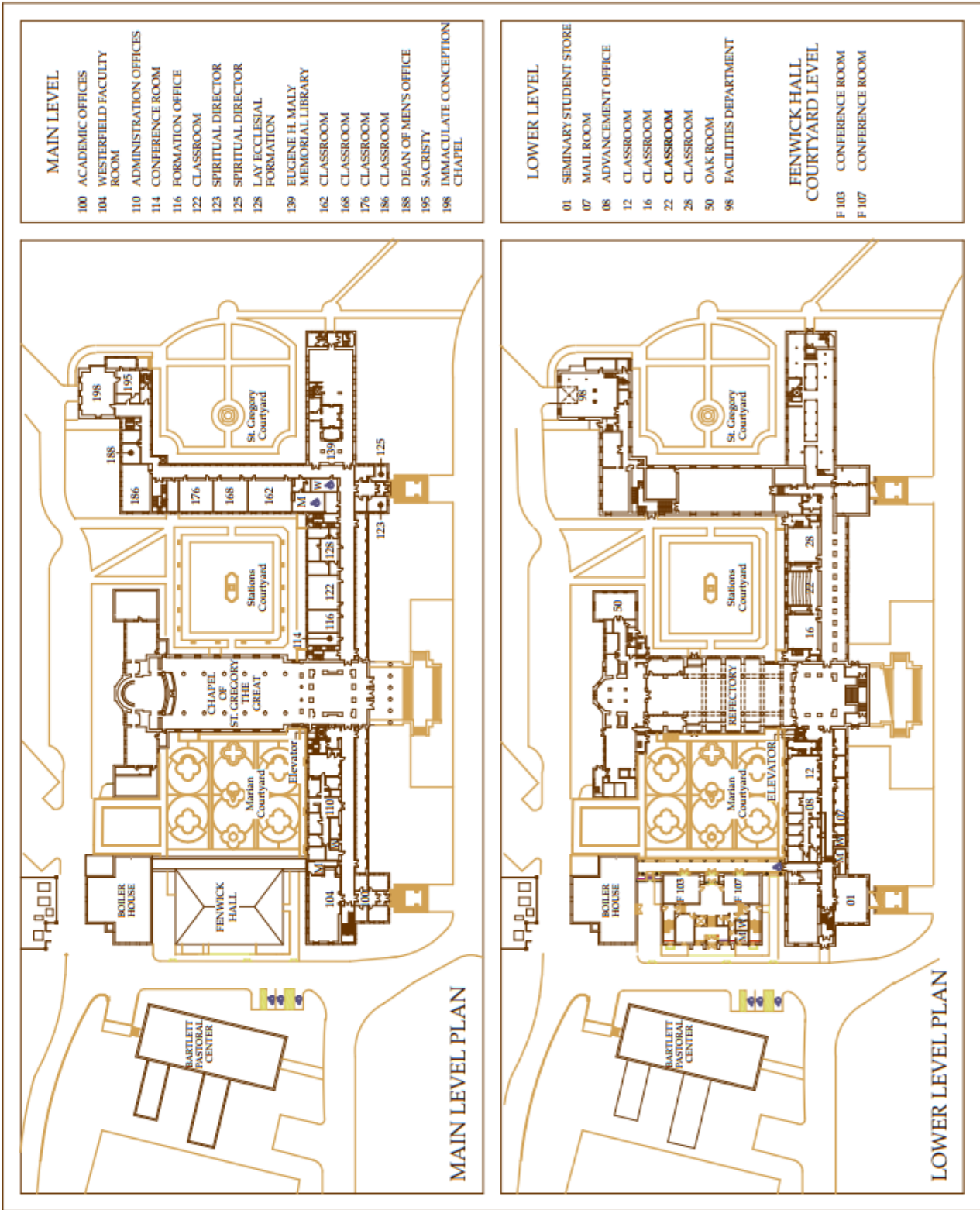
### **Retreats/Days of Reflection**

Lay ecclesial formation students are expected to attend an annual retreat or day of formation. This requirement may be fulfilled by an event offered by the School of Theology, a parish, or a retreat center. Please inform the coordinator of lay ecclesial formation before attending so that participation may be noted.

## **Policies and Procedures**

Students are asked to carefully review the annual [Catalog](#) and the MTSM [website \(www.athenaeum.edu\)](http://www.athenaeum.edu) for detailed information on admissions, registration, tuition, and academic policies including credit hours, student records, grievance procedures, academic standing, grading, class attendance, transfer of credits, etc.

# Main Campus Wayfinding Map





## Contact Information

Rev. Ryan Ruiz  
Dean, School of Theology  
513-231-2223 x 278

[rruiz@athenaeum.edu](mailto:r Ruiz@athenaeum.edu)

Rev. David Endres  
Dean, Athenaeum of Ohio (Chief Academic Officer)  
513-231-2223 x 172

[dendres@athenaeum.edu](mailto:dendres@athenaeum.edu)

Mrs. Aimee Baer May  
Coordinator, Lay Ecclesial Formation  
513-560-2451

[amay@athenaeum.edu](mailto:amay@athenaeum.edu)

Mr. Jeff Royer  
Registrar/Director of Assessment  
513-233-6118

[jroyer@athenaeum.edu](mailto:jroyer@athenaeum.edu)

Ms. Connie Song  
Director, Eugene H- Maly Library  
513-233-6136

[csong@athenaeum.edu](mailto:csong@athenaeum.edu)

Ms. Melanie Suer  
Administrative Assistant, Deans' Office  
513-233-6126

[msuer@athenaeum.edu](mailto:msuer@athenaeum.edu)

Bookstore

[bookstore@athenaeum.edu](mailto:bookstore@athenaeum.edu)

Business Office  
513-231-2223